

## **Edgar Allan Poe House**

### *Request for Proposals: Questions & Answers*

1. Q: Is attendance at the Pre Proposal Meeting mandatory?

A: No.

2. Q: Is there an opportunity to participate via conference call?

A: No.

3. Q: Was the Poe Society formed to care for the house?

A: No, it was a pre-existing organization that brought public attention to the Poe House to prevent its demolition. The Poe House Museum opened in 1949 and was operated by the Poe society, as volunteer organization.

4. Q: Is there an analysis of the current budget?

A: A copy of the current budget will be provided to the Selected Consultant.

5. Q: Explain the multi-agency operation of the Poe House?

A: The Poe House is owned by the Housing Authority of Baltimore City. It is leased to the Mayor & City Council of Baltimore for the purpose of museum operation by the Commission for Historical & Architectural Preservation (CHAP).

6. Q: Who will decide on the consultant selection?

A: The Advisory Panel as described in the RFP.

7. Q: Will the Poe House remain Housing Authority owned?

A: To be determined.

8. Q: Is there a capital budget for the Poe House?

A: There are no future City funds available for capital budget or operations.

9. Q: Does the Poe Society still exist?

A: Yes, however it is a one-person operation. The organization is not in a position to offer financial support to the Poe House.

10. Q: Do you have a committee to help?

A: A group of volunteers help to implement plans and events. The Museum curator is the only staff position.

11. Q: Are there volunteer docents?

A: No, the Museum Curator provides tours of the house.

12. Q: Are there regular hours?

A: Yes. The house is open Thursday, Friday and Saturday afternoon.

13. Q: What is the implementation plan?

A: There is not an implementation plan at this time.

14. Q: Is there funding available for 2011-2012?

A: There is funding available to continue programming through fiscal 2011 (July 2010-June 2011).

15. Q: Is there funding available for fiscal 2012?

A: To be determined. The budget process for 2012 is beginning now.

16. Q: Is there any wiggle room in the schedule?

A: No.

17. Q: When do you expect to decide on a consultant?

A: Within one month of December 8, 2010, we expect to select a consultant and begin discussion and negotiations.

18. Q: How many sites does CHAP operate?

A: The Poe House is the only one.

19. Q: Is this plan intended to be a model for operation of other sites?

A: No, the RFP and resulting plan are for the purposes of the Poe House.

20. Q: Who would be the contacts for this project?

A: The Museum Curator and the Executive Director of CHAP.

21. Q: How many volunteers do you have?

A: A core group of eight people.

22. Q: How many visitors do you have?

A: The average number of annual visitors is 5,000.

23. Q: How do you capture the number of visitors?

A: This is an approximation of tour group numbers and individual visits.

24. Q: Do you have a pre-existing partnership with other groups?

A: Yes, the Westminster Preservation Trust.

25. Q: Will National Heritage Area funds be available to the Poe House?

A: To be determined.

26. Q: Have you applied for a Save America's Treasures grant?

A: No.

27. Q: What are the capital needs of the Poe House?

A: After restoring the Poe House in the 1970's, we have successfully maintained the museum for more than 30 years. This vigilant stewardship

has prevented the need for major capital work. We would like for this level of stewardship to continue.

28. Q: Is there a mission statement for the Poe House?

A: No.

29. Q: Is the Poe House surrounded by the Poe Homes?

A: Yes. The Poe House and Museum is an important landmark in the Poe Homes community. It is well regarded and respected by the residents of the Poe Homes.

30. Q: What is the occupancy status of the Poe Homes?

A: The units are filled under the coordination of the Housing Authority.

31. Q: Does CHAP raise funds for anything?

A: Yes, the Poe House raises funds to support events including the annual Poe Birthday Celebration and Halloween. Also, CHAP has an "Adopt-A-Monument Program" to receive private contributions to help support care of City-owned monuments. (This is the limit of CHAP fund raising activities).

32. Q: What is the nature of the Poe Birthday Celebration?

A: This annual event is held in Westminster Hall (Poe's gravesite) and features theatrical presentations and music. Tickets are sold to attend the event.

33. Q: Are the Birthday participants volunteers?

A: The actors and performers are paid. A core group of volunteers help to host the event. There is a small net income.

34. Q: Do you have a mailing list?

A: Yes. It includes 1500 people.

35. Q: Do you communicate with them regularly?

A: Communications are provided through the website and Facebook page.

36. Q: Do you have excess capacity to devote to implementation?

A: To be determined.

37. Q: Is the Museum Curator at a point of retirement?

A: Possibly, but has not expressed interest in doing so at this time.

38. Q: Would the Museum Curator no longer be a City employee?

A: Do not know at this time.

39. Q: What is the role of Visit Baltimore?

A: Visit Baltimore and the Poe House are close partners. Visit Baltimore is very supportive. We are all partners within the Baltimore National Heritage Area.

40. Q: Does Visit Baltimore provide funds for the Poe House?

A: No, visit Baltimore does not provide operating funds for the Poe House.

41. Q: What percent of time does the Museum Curator spend on Poe House activities?

A: The activities are not the same every day. The house does require daily attention. Time is spent regularly responding to e-mails and maintaining the museum, in addition to providing tours, program and event planning.

42. Q: Who cleans the house? Who pays the bills?

A: The Museum Curator cleans the house. The Department of Planning pays the bills.

43. Q: Who develops the programming?

A: The Museum Curator.

44. Q: Who owns the collections?

A: Various groups who have made long term loans. The museum owns a few items that were gifts.

45. Q: Is the office in the Poe House?

A: No, the Museum Curator's office is in the Planning Department.

46. Q: How far away is the Westminster Cemetery (Poe gravesite)?

A: Six blocks.

47. Q: Is there a Baltimore writer's tour?

A: We are not aware of one, although this is a good idea.

48. Q: Was the house originally free standing?

A: No, it was part of a row.

49. Q: How do the neighbors feel about the house?

A: They love the house. It is part of the community.

50. Q: What does the community need?

A: They need the security of the Poe House. It is a source of pride and a stabilizing factor in the community.

51. Q: Is University of Maryland near?

A: Yes, the Biotech Center is right down the street.

52. Q: How many can you accommodate on a museum tour?

A: 20-25.

53. Q: When you were involved in 1976 (the Baltimore Bicentennial) were there other volunteers of our generation?

A: A few.

54. Q: Were there others involved with the commitment of the Museum Curator?

A: No

55. Q: What is the nearest Elementary school or charter school?

A: James McHenry Elementary school near Hollins Street Market.

56. Q: What is the nearest active CDC?

A: We not aware of any.

57. Q: What is the nearest public transportation?

A: Number 3 bus on Saratoga Street and a bus line on Fayette and Baltimore Street, and the Charm City Circulator.

58. Q: Is the Poe House on the Charm City Circulator stop or on the Circulator map?

A: No and no.

59. Q: Who operates the Charm City Circulator?

A: Don't know.

60. Q: Are the Poe House hours published?

A: Yes, in various forums.

61. Q: What kind of HVAC does it have? What kind of climate control?

A: Window units in two rooms. No room for climate control.

62. Q: What is the tourist experience?

A: Each person experiences something different. Some people are in awe while other people feel humbled by the size of the house. Self guided tour with occasional interaction with guide if crowds permit.

63. Q: Do we know where Poe got married?

A: It is believed that they intended to get married in Baltimore, but this can't be proven. Records are incomplete. They married officially in Richmond.

64. Q: Is there confusion about Poe's Grave and the Poe House?

A: Yes. Cab drivers are always dropping people off at the Poe Grave saying it's the Poe House and vice versa.

65. Q: What is the nature of relationship between Westminster Hall and Poe House?

A: We self promote each others sites. Westminster Hall lets the Poe House bring school tours to their site and will call the Poe House if they need help. They are more of a venue than a historical tourist spot.

66. Q: How many visitors to the graveyard?

A: About 50,000 a year.

67. Q: How many donations are made?

A: Varies. (Note: Admission is not charged, but donations are encouraged at time of visit. We are not responsible for what other publications, magazines and websites published about the Poe House).

68. Q: Who receives the donations?

A: Poe House

69. Q: How much per year?

A: Varies.



70. Q: Is the trio (Baltimore Housing Authority, Mayor and City Council and Poe House) going to make the decision on who gets the contract?

A: The consultant will be selected based upon recommendation of the advisory panel. The Board of Estimates must approve the contract with the selected consultant.

71. Q: Will ownership be transferred?

A: We do not know at this time. This is to be decided later.

72. Q: Is there a Governance Board.

A: No